

AN
INDEPENDENT
IRISH
PARLIAMENT



IRISH 1798 COLLECTION

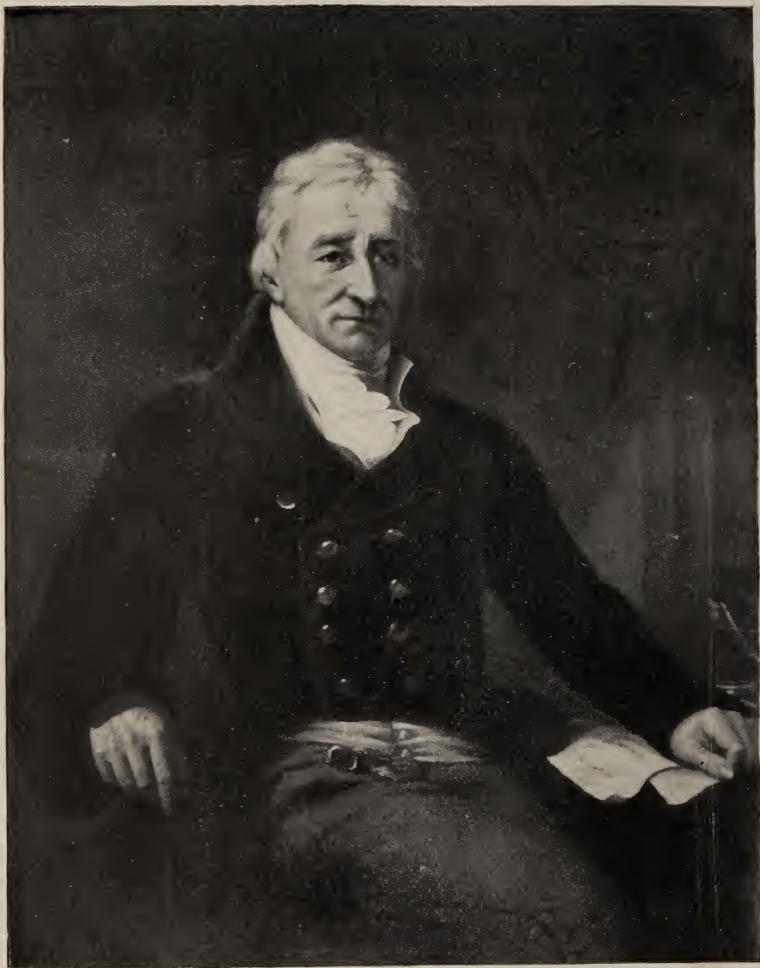
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An Independent Irish Parliament

The Path to Peace



James Ramsay.]

[Photo T. Geoghegan.

HENRY GRATTAN.

From a copy made for Lady Laura Grattan by Sir Thomas A. Jones, P.R.H.A., for the purpose of presentation to the National Gallery of Ireland, of the portrait in the possession of the Grattan family.

AN INDEPENDENT IRISH PARLIAMENT

The Path to Peace

By
AN IRISH KING'S COUNSEL



DUBLIN
THE TALBOT PRESS, LIMITED
85 TALBOT STREET
1921

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An Independent Irish Parliament The Path to Peace

CHAPTER I.

AN "UNQUESTIONABLE" RIGHT.

THAT the Act of "Union" between Great Britain and Ireland has proved a disastrous failure will now be universally admitted : opinions may differ as to the cause of the failure, the fact is indisputable. That Act has been, and still is, the main obstacle to any true union between the two countries. A hundred and twenty years of discord have elapsed since it was carried by intimidation and corruption and to-day the relations between Great Britain and Ireland are more bitterly hostile than ever.

No one who reads the history of the Union in the impartial pages of Mr. Lecky can question its infamy. The late Mr. Roosevelt said to the present writer at the White House, Washington, "I cannot understand any man who read Lecky's history being a Unionist." The Act has brought disgrace on England and misery on Ireland ; its repeal is essential to a national reconciliation.

On the 16th April, 1782, Henry Grattan carried in the Irish House of Commons the following declaration of Irish independence in the form of an address to the throne :—

“ The Kingdom of Ireland is a distinct Kingdom with a Parliament of her own, and there is no body of men competent to make laws to bind the nation but the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland.”

The address was accepted by the King and the British Parliament, and the Act 6, George I., which averred that Acts of the English Parliament were binding in Ireland was repealed. A few years later a “ Renunciatory” Act was passed by the British Parliament declaring the independence of the Irish Parliament and law courts to be

“ established and ascertained for ever and at no time hereafter to be questionable or questioned.”

Of this charter of independence Ireland was robbed by intimidation and corruption. Do those words seem too strong? England’s greatest statesmen in the English House of Commons denounced the “ baseness and black-guardism of the ‘ Union’.”

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE "UNION" WAS CARRIED.

It has been conclusively proved by State documents preserved in Dublin Castle that to facilitate the Union a civil war in Ireland was deliberately engineered and savagely suppressed. Sir Ralph Abercrombie, commander of the forces, publicly protested and resigned rather than participate in the infamy. Giattan's description of the conduct of the Government is, in the present condition of Ireland, worth recalling :

" On one side there was the camp of the rebel, on the other the camp of the minister, a greater traitor than the rebel. The stronghold of the constitution was nowhere to be found. Two desperate parties were in arms against the constitution. I could not join the rebels. I could not join the Government. I could not join torture, I could not join half-hanging, I could not take part with either. I was therefore absent from a scene in which I could not be active without self-reproach. I think now as I thought then that the treason of the minister against the liberty of the people was infinitely worse than the rebellion of the people. The rebels were punished :—but I missed the Honourable Gentleman on the scaffold."

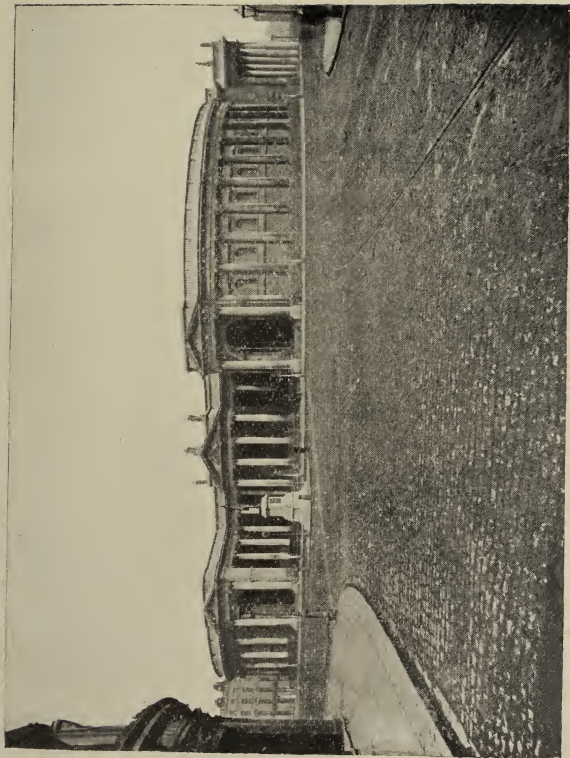
When the rebellion was suppressed the intimidation continued and all popular opposition to the "Union" was punished by brutal reprisals.

One illustration amongst many must suffice. Dublin was vehement in its opposition. "Accordingly," we read, "at about nine at night a party of military stationed at the old Custom House, Essex Bridge, silently sallied out with trailed arms without any civil magistrate and only a sergeant to command them. When they arrived at Capel Street they found the people vehemently cheering their friends and with equal vehemence booing their enemies. But there was no tumult. No magistrate appeared, no Riot Act was read; nothing was done in any way to warrant the interference of the military. The soldiers, however, instantly took up position across the street and, without being in any way attacked, fired a volley of balls into the crowd. One man fell, shot stone dead, at the feet of Mr. Hamilton, the King's Proctor, in Admiralty, who was out to look at the illuminations. For this military outrage no one was punished, no one was so much as reprimanded."

Many other similar military reprisals are recorded in Lecky. Intelligent readers may, perhaps, find parallels in the more modern history of Ireland.

But it was on corruption, reckless, shameless, corruption, that the engineers of the Union principally relied. The instances of corruption are innumerable, "gross as a mountain open, palpable"; the sole difficulty is in selection.

An attempt was made early in the proceedings by Lord Chancellor Clare on the honour of the Irish Bar. At a meeting specially called a motion in favour of the Union was proposed. To the credit of the Bar, it was rejected



[Photo W. Lawrence.]

THE IRISH HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.
(Bank of Ireland.)

by a majority of one hundred and sixty-six to thirty-two. The minority though defeated were rewarded. A contemporary list published by Sir Jonah Barrington shows that every man of the minority was provided with a job ranging from £500 to £5,000. Seven of them were made judges of the High Court at a salary of £3,300, two of them Commissioners of Value at a salary of £5,000 a year. The sum distributed amongst those zealous, disinterested advocates of the Union was well over £50,000 a year. On the other hand the lawyers who opposed were promptly deprived of every place which the Government could control, and shut out from all hope of promotion."

In all departments of public life the same practice prevailed. Supporters of the Union were bribed, opponents were ruined. Over and over again this wholesale corruption was denounced on the floor of the House of Commons by Grattan, Ponsonby, Bushe and Plunket. The Government made no denial or excuse.

"At this moment," said Plunket, "the threat of dismissal from office is suspended over the heads of the men who sit around me to influence their votes. I would warn you against the consequences of carrying such a measure by such means, but I see the necessary defect of it in the honest and universal indignation which the adoption of such means excites. In the most express manner I deny the competency of Parliament to do this thing. I tell you that if, circumstanced as you are, you pass this Act, it will be a mere nullity, and no man in Ireland will be bound to obey it."

Startling instances of individual corruption might be cited by the score. Mr. Handcock, member for Athlone, elected as an opponent of the "Union," which he had vigorously denounced, was converted by a peerage and

was duly "ennobled" under the title of Lord Castlemaine. Lord Belvedere was guilty of similar apostacy and similarly rewarded. The instances of such "baseness and blackguardism" are almost innumerable, but the case of Mr. Trench deserves at least a passing notice. He haggled for a big price and came down to the House of Commons pledged against the "Union." A graphic account is given by Sir Jonah Barrington of his purchase on the floor of the House under the eyes of the members. The division promised to be close. Mr. Cooke, the Under Secretary, by whom the bribes were usually distributed, consulted with Lord Castlereagh. From Lord Castlereagh he crossed over to Mr. Trench. After a brief conversation a bargain was struck, each smiled and nodded his satisfaction, and "in a few minutes Mr. Trench rose to apologise for having indiscreetly declared he would support the amendment. He added that he thought better of the subject since he had unguardedly expressed himself, that he was convinced he was wrong and would support the minister." In addition to payment in hard cash, he was raised to the peerage under the style and title of Lord Ashtown. The motion in favour of the Union, which had been previously defeated, was carried by a majority of one. If the Castle had not bid up to Mr. Trench's reserve price, it would have been lost by a majority of two.

Gilbert, most careful of historians, writes : "The amount expended by the Government to procure a majority, has been stated at £3,000,000, exclusive of twenty-nine new creations and twenty promotions in the Irish peerage and six English peerages conferred on Irish noblemen on account of Irish services at this time." The largest sums paid for boroughs appears to be £52,000 to

Lord Downshire for seven seats and £45,000 to Lord Ely for six. These vast sums were paid out of the Irish Exchequer for the destruction of Irish independence. As late as 1830 Lord Gray "did not hesitate to express his abiding conviction that there never was worse means resorted to for the carrying any measure than those by which the 'Union' was accomplished." Grattan has put on record his belief that "of those who voted for the Union not more than seven were unbribed."

Can it be contended that an Act so passed has any moral force? Ireland was cheated of her charter of independence. In honour and justice England is bound to restore it.

The fact must be emphasized that the Irish Nation never accepted the "Union." Dan O'Connell spoke against it in his maiden speech to a great Catholic meeting in Dublin and carried the whole country with him in his prolonged agitation for repeal. Five Irish rebellions have emphasized the national protest against the "Union." A hundred Coercion Acts, culminating in Martial Law, failed to enforce it. By the Union indescribable shame has been brought on England and misery on Ireland. How fully Grattan's prophecy was fulfilled let the present condition of Ireland testify. "You cannot," he told the pro-Unionist Government in the House of Commons, "force men's minds. Like a chill wind which creeps up from the marshes, a sullen, slowly-rising discontent will cloud the land and desperation will breed rebellion. Suppose you triumph, what union can you form from force and hate? A despotism founded upon wrong brutally inflicted and sullenly endured :—a union to make England weak and Ireland miserable."

CHAPTER III.

URGENT.

THE condition of Ireland will not brook delay. A country cannot be governed for ever by what has been aptly called "A Competition in Crime," where the appointed guardians of law and order are daily engaged in arson and murder with the implied, if not the express, sanction of the Government.

"For they bid this be done"

"When evil deeds have their permissive pass "

"And not their punishment."

The Partition and Crown Colony Act is no remedy. The small minority in Ulster do not want it : the vast majority of Irishmen repudiate it as an insult to Irish Nationality. No man is mad enough to suggest that it will secure the appeasement of Ireland. It can but aggravate the anarchy now prevailing in that unhappy country.

It is important to recall by what methods this Act was secured. When Home Rule for all Ireland, after a protracted struggle with the House of Lords, finally received the sanction of the Sovereign as an Act of Parliament, the Government's duty of enforcing it was met by threats of rebellion. Rifles were imported from Germany, and the Ulster Volunteers enrolled, drilled, and armed to resist the enforcement of the law.

Sir Edward Carson was the leader of this contingent rebellion; but the whole Unionist Party in England were pledged to his assistance. Mr. Bonar Law, recently leader of the House of Commons, Lord Birkenhead (popularly known as "Galloper Smith," from his active service on the Ulster battlefield), now Lord Chancellor of England, were amongst his most ardent supporters, with a host of others who have since been rewarded with positions of honour and emolument.

Extracts from the speeches of those distinguished contingent rebels have been published in two pamphlets, entitled respectively *The Grammar of Anarchy* and *The Handbook of Rebellion*. But Mr. Bonar Law has judicially declared that these pamphlets, containing nothing else but extracts from the speeches of himself and his associates, are "seditious documents" which cannot be quoted or even housed in Ireland without peril of fine and imprisonment. I am therefore compelled to refer the curious reader to the English publisher of the pamphlets (Nesbit & Co., London) for further information on the subject.

Suffice it now to say that contingent rebellion had an absolute triumph. The Home Rule Bill had been first postponed and then repealed, and a "Partition and Crown Colony" Bill passed in its stead.

The triumph of contingent rebellion naturally discredited peaceful and constitutional agitation in Ireland. Once again councils of violence prevailed, and in the Easter Week Rising the doctrines that were preached in Belfast were practised in Dublin. Rebellion in Dublin was as sternly punished as in Belfast it had been magnificently rewarded.

While bitter disappointment and resentment pre-

vailed in Ireland, Sinn Fein seized its opportunity. At the next General Election the old Constitutional Party was almost obliterated, and a great Sinn Fein majority, was returned in its stead.

The years that followed of fierce struggle between the Government and the Sinn Feiners have reduced the country to a disastrous condition. A competition in crime has resulted in wholesale arson and murder. By a Crown Colony Government, as provided by a recent Act of Parliament for twenty-six counties Ireland's misery must infallibly be accentuated and indefinitely prolonged.

It is not necessary at present to award the blame for the utter lawlessness, the absolute anarchy now prevailing in Ireland. But it is surely expedient to inquire if no path to peace can be found.

The Partition and Crown Colony Act need not bar the way. No one in Ireland really desires a prolonged partition. The Premier twice voted and spoke directly against partition in the House of Commons, and helped to carry Home Rule for an undivided Ireland.

In October, 1912, when the Home Rule battle was raging, Sir Edward Carson repudiated the policy of partition. "I ask no separate treatment for Ulster," he declared; "that is not our policy, and never has been our policy."

The policy of partition was first raised, not by any member of the Unionist Party, but by a Radical free-lance, Mr. Agar Roberts, on an amendment to exclude four Ulster counties from the scope of the Home Rule Bill, and the amendment at once extorted a violent protest from Ulster. Mr. J. Allan, Hon. Sec. of the Ulster Unionist Council, wrote to the *Times*: "I have frequent

opportunities of knowing the feelings and the opinions of the Belfast people and of all Unionists in Ulster, and I have never yet heard one man suggest the settlement of this question by the exclusion of the four north-eastern counties from the operation of Home Rule. The unanimous opinion of Unionist Ulster is against any such treatment."

Four of the six counties to which, by the recent Act, a separate Parliament has been accorded, have no inveterate desire for partition, by the other two it is bitterly resented. If a generous settlement were offered and accepted by the twenty-six counties now threatened with Crown Colony Government, it may be reasonably assumed that the excluded area would be willing, if not at once at no distant date, to throw in its lot with the rest of Ireland.

A prominent Sinn Feiner is reported to have said : "Redmond asked fifty per cent. of what Ireland was entitled to; he was promised forty per cent.; he got nothing. We asked a hundred per cent.; we will accept eighty." The restoration of the independent Kingdom of Ireland, which was guaranteed by two Acts of the British Parliament, is at least eighty per cent. of the demand of the Republicans.

Nor should it be forgotten that England has as much to gain as Ireland by substituting a union of hearts for a union of force. Her honour and reputation are deeply involved.

CHAPTER IV.

A GRADUAL AWAKENING.

ALREADY all reasonable Ulster Unionists are beginning to realize that the measure which Sir Edward Carson and his armed retainers won for them by threats of rebellion is a curse in guise of a boon. Shrewd Sir Edward himself refuses to take part in the parliament which he has created and whose failure he must already foresee. Its net result is to constitute six counties of Ulster a hostile foreign country in the North of Ireland with an Irish difficulty of its own in the shape of two protesting counties and the protesting city of Derry. For this boon they will have the privilege of paying a tribute of £8,000,000 a year to Great Britain.

The project if persisted in spells the financial ruin of the six prosperous counties, marooned at the edge of an alien Ireland. Their flourishing industries are financed by the great Ulster banks, "The Belfast," "The Northern," and "The Ulster." The Belfast Bank has three offices in Dublin, the Northern three, and the Ulster four. All those banks have scores of branch offices and agencies scattered through the provincial towns of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught. The segregation of six Ulster counties from the rest of Ireland would be a disastrous blow, not merely to the prosperity of the Ulster banks, but to the system of credit on which Ulster industries depend.

Belfast and Derry have a large and profitable wholesale trade in the south, east, and west : that trade could hardly survive the exclusion of Belfast and Derry from a self-governed Ireland.

The Ulster members of the Irish Bar, even the most prominent Unionists who sit for Unionist constituencies are, as I have reason to know, strongly and unanimously opposed to the policy of exclusion. Heretofore they have secured at least their fair share of legal practice and patronage. They bitterly resent the prospect of banishment from the Four Courts of Dublin.

Having realized that the maintenance of the Union, for which their long battle was fought, is impracticable, the Ulster Unionists will soon be, if they are not already, in a mood for a friendly arrangement with the great majority of their fellow-countrymen. Fiscal control and immunity from tribute are not without their appeal to the hard-headed business men of Ulster.

CHAPTER V.

THE HONOUR OF ENGLAND.

THE Premier over and over again declared that England joined in the great war to secure the liberty of small nations. England's present treatment of Ireland contrasts strangely with such professions. She has always prided herself on being the champion of the weak and the oppressed. Her sympathy and aid were at the service of the Armenians and the Bulgarians. She can hardly regard with pride the system at present prevailing in Ireland.

Ireland has no quarrel with the English people : the English democracy were not responsible for the "base-ness and blackguardism of the 'Union'." Nor does it realize what is now being done in its name in Ireland before the eyes of the scandalized nations. Its ignorance and not its will consents. The Government is indeed wise in its generation in refusing to Ireland such a Sworn Commission as exposed the German atrocities in Belgium ; but truth will out, and comment, indignant or contemptuous, of foreign nations must be bitter to a people who have ever prided themselves on their love of justice and freedom.

Only by a full measure of National Self-Government to Ireland can English reputation be redeemed. The degrading Act of "Union," that blackest page in English

history, must be torn from the Statute Book and its very memory effaced.

Let it be clearly understood that it is justice, not generosity, that Ireland demands; it is atonement, not concession, that England has to offer.

Objection is often taken, even by well-meaning friends, to recalling the long record of injustice and cruelty in the English domination in Ireland. Its accuracy is not disputed, but its expediency is denied. "These things are all over," it is urged, "why rake up the embers of old wrongs? Let the dead past bury its dead." In the existing condition of Ireland such pleas are of little avail. The past is not dead: it lives in the present. When wrongs are righted, will come the time for forgiveness and friendship.

Meanwhile there is urgent need to awake the conscience of the English democracy. They are not responsible for the past; they are responsible for the present and the future. There is the duty of reparation; it is for them, with the shameful record of the past before their eyes, to insist on a just, and even a generous, settlement of the long-enduring conflict between the two nations.

This record has the further advantage of proving how imperishable is the spirit of Irish nationality, what oppression and tribulation it has survived, and how hopeless must ever be the attempt to extinguish it.

In Ireland the blood of rebels has ever been the seed of rebellion.

CHAPTER VI.

CONFISCATION.

ENGLISH policy in Ireland seems from first to last to have had three distinct objects. Firstly, the confiscation of Irish land; secondly, the persecution of Irish religion; thirdly, the destruction of Irish manufacture and commerce.

Confiscation of the land was, in the view of Edmund Burke, "the first object and the true genius and policy of English government in Ireland." This policy was vigorously and systematically prosecuted in the reign of Good Queen Bess, when the whole of Ireland gradually passed under English dominion. Let that impartial Unionist historian, Mr. Lecky, describe the methods of English government in Ireland under this beneficent sovereign and the results.

"The suppression of the native races," he writes, "was carried on with a ferocity which surpassed Alva in the Netherlands, and has seldom been exceeded in the pages of history." In this war of extermination, cruelty and treachery played equal parts. "Essex," Lecky continues, "accepted the hospitality of Sir Brian O'Neill. After the banquet when the Irish chief retired unsuspectingly to rest the English general surrounded the house with soldiers, captured his host with his wife and brother, sent them all to Dublin for execution, and massacred the whole body of his friends and retainers."

“ An English officer, a friend of the Viceroy, invited seventeen Irish gentlemen to supper and as they rose from the table he had them all stabbed. A Catholic archbishop, named Hurley, fell into the hands of the English authorities and before they sent him to the gallows they tortured him to extort confession of treasons with the most horrible tortures human nature can endure, by roasting his feet.”

“ But these isolated episodes,” the historian continues, “ by diverting the mind from the broad features of the war, serve rather to diminish than enhance its atrocity. The war as conducted by Carew, by Gilbert, by Pelham, by Mountjoy was literally a war of extermination. The slaughter of Irishmen was looked upon as the slaughter of wild beasts. Not only men but even women and children who fell into the hands of the English were deliberately and systematically butchered.”

“ Bands of soldiers traversed great tracks of country slaying every living thing they met. The sword was not found sufficiently expeditious, but another method proved much more efficacious. Year after year over a great part of Ireland all means of human subsistence were destroyed. No quarter was given to prisoners who surrendered, and the whole population was skilfully and steadily starved to death. The pictures of the condition of Ireland at this time are as terrible as anything in the pages of human history.”

The poet Spenser, describing what he had seen in Munster, tells how “out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forward on their hands, for their legs could not bear them. They looked like anatomies of death, they spoke like ghosts crying out of their graves, they did eat dead carrion, happy when they could find

them, inasmuch as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves.”

Holinshed declares that “the land itself, which before those wars was populous, well inhabited, and rich in all the blessings of God, being plenteous of corn, full of cattle, and well stored with other good commodities became so barren, both of men and beasts, that whoever did travel from one end of all Munster to the other, about six score miles, he would not meet any man, woman, or child, save in the cities, nor yet any beasts.”

Lest it be suggested by some apologist that this “firm” treatment was rendered necessary by the inherent wickedness of the Irish, infected by “a double dose of original sin,” let us hear the testimony of Sir John Davies to the character of the Irish, a little later in the reign of James I.

“I dare affirm,” he writes, “that for the span of five years past there have not been so many malefactors worthy of death found in all the six circuits of this realm (which is now divided into thirty-two shires at large), as in one circuit of six shires, namely, the western circuit of England. For the truth is,” he adds, “that in time of peace the Irish are more fearful to offend the law than the English, or any other nation whatsoever.”

In his famous letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, Edmund Burke declares that “the original scheme” (of confiscation) “was never departed from for a single hour.”

“A regular series of operations were carried on for the total extirpation of the interest of the natives in their own soil, until this subtle ravage being carried to the last extreme of insolence and oppression under Lord Strafford, it kindled the flames of that rebellion which broke out in the year 1641. By the issue of that war, by the turn Lord

Clarendon gave to things at the Restoration and by the total reduction of the kingdom in Ireland in 1691, the ruin of the native Irish and in great measure of the race of English settlers was completely accomplished. Sweeping as were the confiscations under Whitworth and before they were completely out-distanced by the confiscations under Cromwell."

In very truth the atrocities which Ireland endured under Elizabeth paled their ineffectual fire before the atrocities of Cromwell, who opened up to the Irish people—

" A lower hell,

To which the hell they suffered seemed a heaven."

" The sieges of Drogheda and Wexford," writes Lecky, " and the massacres which accompanied them deserve to rank in history with the most atrocious exploits of Tilly or Wallenstein, and made the name of Cromwell eternally hated in Ireland." " At Drogheda," according to Carte, " the officers of Cromwell's army promised quarter to such as would lay down their arms, but when they had done so and the place was in their power, Cromwell gave orders that no quarter should be given."

Ormond wrote that " the cruelties exercised there for five days would make as many several pictures of inhumanity as was to be found in the book of martyrs."

" In the letters of Cromwell," Lecky quaintly continues, " we have a curious picture of the semi-religious spirit which was manifested, at least professed, by the victors." Cromwell regards it as " a special instance of divine Providence" that the " Catholics, having on the previous Sunday celebrated mass in the great church of St. Peter, in this very place near a thousand of them were

put to the sword," and he adds exultantly that "all their friars were knocked on the head promiscuously except two who were made prisoners and executed."

"Give me leave to say," he continues, "how the work was wrought. It was set upon some of our hearts that a great thing should be done, not by power or might but by the Spirit of God. Therefore it is good that God alone have all the glory. I wish that all honest men should give glory of this to God, to whom indeed the praise of this mercy belongs."

The historian, Sir Anthony Wood, estimates that at least three thousand were slain, exclusive of women and children. He describes the massacre in the church from the narrative of his brother, who was present. "The soldiers," we read, "caught up children as bucklers against the despairing resistance of their victims." "After they had killed all in the church," writes Thomas Wood, who took part in the assault, "they went into the vaults where were all the flower and choicest of the women and ladies." Wood attempted to save but one lady of all this swarm of virgins, but a soldier perceiving his intention, and actuated, no doubt, by a "semi-religious" feeling, ran his sword through her bosom, and doubtless, as his pious commander enjoined, gave the glory of "this mercy" to God.

According to Sir William Petty, "at the close of this war out of a population of 1,466,000 over 616,000 (nearly half the entire population of the country had perished by the sword, the plague, and by famine artificially produced."

The wholesale slaughter of the inhabitants was followed by the wholesale confiscation of the lands. "The end," writes Lecky, "at which the English adventurers

had been steadily aiming since the reign of Queen Elizabeth was accomplished. All, or almost all, the land of the Irish in the three largest and richest provinces was divided amongst these adventurers, and the confiscation was confirmed by Charles II. for whose father those rebels had fought.”

CHAPTER VII.

PERSECUTION.

THE second great object of English rule in Ireland was the degradation of Ireland's religion, or, to speak more precisely, the degradation of the great body of the inhabitants of Ireland by whom that religion was professed.

"There was but one thing," writes Lecky, "that the Irish people valued more than their land and that also was in peril." By the legislation of Elizabeth the Act of Uniformity was established in Ireland. All religious worship except the Anglican was made illegal and all persons who were absent from church without a sufficient reason were liable to a fine. England had put on and put off her religion as easily as a loose glove, at the successive orders of Henry VIII., Mary, and Elizabeth. But the Irish were not so tractable, and the result were the "penal laws"—a religious persecution which in meanness and in savagery was without parallel in the history of the world, and of which some lingering traces still survive in Ireland.

Under King Charles I. the prosecution of Irish Catholics was slightly relaxed, but it was renewed with ferocious vigour under Cromwell, whose professed object was the extirpation of papacy. One of his adherents in Parliament declared that "the conversion of the Irish papist should be effected with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other," Pym called for "the extirpation of the priests," and Sir William Parsons boasted at a

banquet that "before a twelvemonth there would not be a Catholic in Ireland."

There can be little doubt that this policy was mainly, if not wholly, responsible for the Irish rebellion which Cromwell suppressed with such unparalleled cruelty.

Only for one brief period, in 1689, when King James II. called together an Irish Parliament, did the Catholic majority exercise power in their own country. In view of the charges of intolerance now current against Irish Catholics it is interesting to recall some of the proceedings of that Parliament.

The Catholics who constituted that assembly had bitter provocation to reprisals. "There was probably," writes Lecky, "scarcely a man in the Irish Parliament of 1689 who had not been deeply injured by the penal enactments in his fortune and his family." Yet that Catholic Parliament, by its first Act, an Act which the Protestant historian confesses to be "far in advance of the age," established absolute religious freedom and equality. By another Act, denying the right of English Parliaments to legislate for Ireland, it laid down the doctrine of Irish liberty, long after vindicated by Grattan and the Volunteers.

The authority of that Parliament was, unfortunately, of brief duration. But by their gallant stand at Limerick the Irish, under Sarsfield, obtained a pledge of religious toleration from the Orange leader who had failed ignominiously to carry the town by storm. The Treaty of Limerick provided that "the Roman Catholics of this kingdom shall enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland as they did enjoy in the reign of Charles II., and that their Majesties" (King William and Queen Mary), "as soon as

their affairs will permit them to summon a Parliament in this kingdom, will endeavour to secure the said Roman Catholics such securities as may preserve them from any disturbance on account of their religion.”

It was further provided that Catholics should be obliged “to take only an oath of allegiance and no other.” This solemn treaty was, in the words of the Protestant poet Davis, “broken ere the ink wherewith ’twas writ was dry.” Every one of its conditions were promptly, continuously, and systematically violated.

There is strong temptation, which must be resisted, to follow the fortunes of the gallant Irish exiles who on their expulsion from Ireland transferred their allegiance to France. Their exploits in the field, especially against the armies of England, form some of the most brilliant pages of continental history. Some busybody, it is recorded, once complained to King Louis that the Irish Brigade were “troublesome.” “So all my enemies declare,” retorted the king. “Cursed be the laws that rob me of such subjects!” exclaimed George II. when the news was brought to him of the Irish triumph at Fontenoy.

But while the Irish exiles rose to eminence in army and State in France and Spain, founding great families that still survive, their re-religionists in Ireland were subjected to intolerable persecution.

Just six months after the signing of the Treaty of Limerick, Catholics were by statute excluded from Parliament and all office, civil, military, and ecclesiastic. This was but the first of a long series of similar enactments. The learned professions were tabooed to Catholics, and purchase or rental of land was forbidden. Their best horse might be purchased by a Protestant for £5.

Catholics were deprived of franchise for Parliament or any corporate body. They were subjected to irresponsible night visitations in quest of arms. They were wholly debarred from education in accordance with their faith. It was penal to educate a Catholic child at home or abroad.

These disabilities were enforced by terrible penalties, the position of spy was made "honourable" by Act of Parliament, and he was encouraged by liberal rewards in the practice of his distinguished profession.

Having deprived the Irish Catholic of all rights of citizenship and property, the penal laws invaded his domestic life. It was enacted in the reign of Queen Anne that any child of a Catholic father who turned Protestant should be entitled to oust him from his estate, and it was further provided that in no case would a Catholic father be allowed to be the guardian of his Protestant child.

The Catholics were permitted to petition by counsel at the Bar of the House of Commons against the passing of this inhuman Act, and the speech of the famous Catholic advocate, Sir Theobald Butler, still extant, is a masterpiece of persuasive eloquence. He entered a powerful appeal against the invasion of the sanctity of the home and the perversion of natural feeling encouraged by the statute.

The House of Commons heard him to the end and unanimously passed the Bill into law.

Still more stringent provisions were enacted against the Catholic bishops and clergy, who were commanded to depart from the country, and subject to be hanged, drawn, and quartered if they returned.

This intolerable code had not even the poor excuse of religious zeal. It was designed not to convert, but to

plunder and degrade the Catholics of Ireland. The rare conversions were of the type described in that amusing book, *The Irish At Home and Abroad*, which tells how a Mr. Groghan, resident in London, being alarmed lest a relative should conform to the Protestant religion and so rob him of a considerable property in Meath, repaired at once to Dublin, reported himself to the necessary authorities, professed in all its prescribed form the Protestant religion, sold his estates on Monday, and relapsed into Popery on Tuesday.

When questioned as to his motive, he replied : “ I would sooner trust my soul to God for a day than my property to the devil for ever.”

On Sunday afternoon, the day of his conversion, he visited the coffee-house in Essex Street, then one of the most select in Dublin, and putting his hand on his sword and throwing round a glance of defiance, he said : “ I read my recantation to-day, and anyone who says I did right is a rascal.”

Thus, stripped bare of liberty and property and every civil and social right, the Irish Catholics, numbering two millions to the half million of their Protestant masters, were veritable helots in their native land. In 1775 an action was brought against a respectable merchant for the recovery of a young Catholic lady who had taken refuge in his house from the persecution of a Protestant relative and had been forcibly abducted. Judgment was given against him with costs, and he was admonished from the Bench that “ the law did not presume a papist to exist in the kingdom nor could they so much as breathe there without the connivance of the Government.”

Nor can it be said here as in other countries the subject race was inferior in any respect to their masters.

Their one crime, their one badge of inferiority, was that they held by their ancient religion which their masters had abandoned, but which was still professed by France, Italy, and Spain, the greatest nations on the continent.

Macaulay, who certainly cannot be regarded as specially indulgent to Catholic claims, summarises the effect of the penal laws. "There were, indeed, Irish Catholics of great ability, energy, and ambition, but they were to be found everywhere except in Ireland, at Versailles, and at Ildefonso, in the armies of Frederick and in the armies of Marie Thérèse. One exile became a marshal of France, another became Prime Minister of Spain. If he had stayed in his native land he would have been regarded as an inferior by all the ignorant and worthless squireens who drank the glorious and immortal memory. In his palace at Madrid he had the pleasure of being assiduously courted by the ambassador of George II. and of bidding defiance in high terms to the ambassador of George III."

Arthur Young believed that the penal code aimed "not so much at the religion as at the property of the Catholics." "The domineering aristocracy of fifty thousand," he writes, "feel the sweets of having two million slaves and have not the least objection to the tenets of the religion which keeps them by the law of the land in subjection."

In *Erskine May's Constitutional History*, Irish Catholics are described as "outlaws and aliens, for ages ruled by a privileged race. Their lands were wrested from them, their rights trampled underfoot, their blood and their religion proscribed."

Edmund Burke also confirms the view that the penal code was framed rather to plunder than to proselytise.

“ From what I have observed,” he writes to an Irish peer, “ it is pride, arrogance, and the spirit of domination, not a bigoted spirit of religion, that has caused and kept up those oppressive statutes.” His letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe is a scathing indictment of the code. “ You abhorred it as I did,” he writes, “ for its vicious perfection, for I must do it justice, it was a complete system, full of coherence and consistency, well digested and well composed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.”

Nor is it to be forgotten that something of the penal code still survives in Ireland. Protestantism is still as much a caste as a creed. The Orange protest against Home Rule was, consciously or unconsciously, dictated by the old spirit of domination. It was equality they feared; it was ascendancy they desired and demanded. They are still jealous as the Indian Brahmin of their caste and its privileges.

CHAPTER VIII.

PLUNDER.

ENGLAND has been described as the “ rich and generous sister ” of Ireland ; it is interesting to ascertain how far the description has heretofore been deserved.

Of the three objects to which British policy in Ireland was devoted, the third was to England the most important. At all hazards British trade must be protected from Irish rivalry. Nor was the danger trifling or remote. Ireland, in the teeth of all obstacles, developed a most alarming aptitude for commerce, and as each new industry threatened successful rivalry it was ruthlessly exterminated by the British Government.

The first attack was on the Irish cattle trade. At the instance of English landlords the importation of any live stock of any kind into England was described as “ unnecessary and destructive to the welfare of the kingdom and a public nuisance,” and strictly prohibited. Dead meat, butter, and cheese were after included in the prohibition. The exclusion of Irish sheep from England had, however, an unexpected result. It served to develop a flourishing Irish woollen trade, whereupon the English woollen manufacturers in their turn petitioned for its suppression.

There was no pretence in those petitions of justice or fair play. Clamorously, shamelessly, greedily they called out to the British King and the British Parliament for the

destruction of their rivals, and in the same spirit the British King and Parliament responded to their prayer. William III., of glorious and immortal memory, pledged himself that he would "do all in his power to discourage Irish trade," and his Parliament gave full effect to his pledge. The preamble of the statute tenth of William III. dwells on the vital importance of a woollen trade to the prosperity, almost to the existence, of a nation, and then proceeds without scruple or shame to kill the flourishing woollen trade in Ireland.

It sets out "forasmuch as the woollen manufacture of cloth, serge, kerseys, and other stuffs, made or mixed with wool, are the greatest and most profitable commodities of this kingdom on which the value of the land and the trade of the nation do chiefly depend, and whereas great quantities of like manufactures have been made and are daily increasing in the kingdom of Ireland and exported thence to foreign markets heretofore supplied by England, which will inevitably sink the value of land and lead to the ruin of the trade and woollen manufacture of this realm, be it therefore enacted." In plain words, that the Irish woollen trade must be suppressed.

The exportation of any form of Irish woollen manufacture was prohibited. The penalty provided for the newly created "offence" was the forfeiture of all the goods carried, of the ship that carried them, and a fine of £500 on the "offender." The penalty of loading goods was £40. Special encouragement was offered to informers, and it was thoughtfully provided that an acquittal in Ireland should be no bar to the prosecution and conviction of the "offender" in England. By a wholly prohibitive impost Irish woollens were also effectually shut

out from "the kingdom of England and the dominion of Wales."

In a similar fashion every other Irish industry that threatened the least rivalry to England was ruthlessly destroyed. Cotton-spinning, glass manufacture, milling, tanning, sugar-refining, and ship-building were all in turn ruined by heavy taxes and prohibitive navigation laws.

It is not necessary to enter into further details. *Cremine ab uno disce omnes*. The suppression of the Irish woollen trade sufficiently illustrates the frank methods of the British Parliament where Irish interests were concerned. Only one Irish industry survived this massacre of the innocents. The linen trade of the north, which in no way affected the commercial interests of England, was allowed to live.

While her industries were thus systematically ruined, the impoverished country was bled white by extortionate taxation. She was subjected to the crushing cost of a military establishment, continuously increasing and wholly uncontrolled. It was estimated that about the middle of the eighteenth century the cost of the military establishment in Ireland in times of peace was generally three times as much as the cost of the civil establishment. In time of war the cost was, of course, enormously increased. During the greater part of that century the permanent military establishment in Ireland was larger in proportion to the population than in Great Britain, irrespective altogether of the vast disproportion of wealth in the two countries.

It is no wonder that the Irish National Debt increased, the Irish Treasury was continuously empty, and the country plunged into unimaginable poverty. While the Irish Protestants oppressed and plundered their

Catholic fellow-countrymen, they were themselves oppressed and plundered by the English. The Catholics were denied even the poor privilege of protest. Complaint, feeble for the most part and intermittent, came from the Protestant minority.

Lecky, quoting from contemporary writers, gives an appalling picture of the condition of the great body of the Irish during the eighteenth century.

“The Irish tracts of Swift,” he writes, “and especially his admirable short view of the state of Ireland, and that ghastly piece of irony, ‘*A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Poor of Ireland from Being a Burden to their Parents and their Country*,’ which was written in 1729, tell the same tale”—a tale of awful misery.

Swift’s “modest proposal” for alleviating the famine, by cooking and eating the children of the poor, was written with such simple force and backed by such plausible argument that many mistook its savage irony for earnest—a mistake which in itself is an illuminating comment on the misery he described.

“The latter tracts,” writes Lecky, “appeared at a time when three terrible years of dearth had reduced the people to the last extremity.” The old and sick, Swift assures us, were every day dying and rotting by cold, famine, filth, and vermin.

“In twenty years,” Lecky continues, “there were at least three or four absolute famines, and that of 1740—41, which followed on the great frost at the end of 1739, though it has hardly left a trace on history and hardly excited any attention in England, was one of the most fearful on record.”

Berkeley, who was then Bishop of Cloyne, in a letter to his friend the poet Prior in May, 1741, writes : “The

distresses of the sick and poor are endless. The havoc of mankind in Cork, Limerick, and some of the adjacent places hath been incredible. About two months since I heard Sir Richard Cox say that five hundred were dead in the parish, though in a country I believe not very populous."

Skelton, a Protestant clergyman of considerable literary talents and of great energy and benevolence of character, wrote at the close of the famine a very remarkable letter. "It was," he writes, "computed by some persons, not without reason, that as many people died of want, or of the disorder occasioned by want, in the last two years as fell by the sword in the massacre of 1641. Whole parishes in some places were almost desolate. Thousands in a barony have perished, some of hunger and others of disorders occasioned by the unnatural and putrid diet."

CHAPTER IX.

“IRISH DISLOYALTY TO ENGLAND.”

THE foregoing pictures of Ireland under English domination are in no sense imaginative or exaggerated. They are the sober words of trustworthy eye-witnesses or of grave and impartial historians. They may serve to explain to the English people a problem by which they have been continuously puzzled, why English rule was from first to last unpopular in Ireland.

In more recent days all the chief leaders of the Irish constitutional movement, including Parnell, John Redmond, Willie Redmond, John Dillon, William O'Brien and a host of others were imprisoned without trial, or after a sham trial, for alleged political offences. In regard to the present condition of things nothing need be said.

It is not pleasant for an Irishman who, like myself, desires cordial friendship between Ireland and England to write those things, and it must be still less pleasant for any fair-minded patriotic Englishman to read them. But they will help him to understand “Irish disloyalty” to England, and perhaps even to make some allowance for the violence with which it is sometimes displayed. Irishmen will forget when Englishmen remember. Surely the time has come when the feud of centuries may close in a great act of justice and reconciliation.

CHAPTER X.

THE REMEDY.

IRELAND'S moral right to Repeal of the "Union" is beyond question. The case of American Secession so often quoted by the Premier is in no sense in point. Ireland's status as an independent nation, her right to an independent Parliament was acknowledged by the Parliament of Britain which solemnly renounced all claim to interfere in the government of the country. That right, of which she was cheated by the Act of "Union," must be restored.

There is no hope that Colonial Home Rule can be accepted by even the most moderate Sinn Féiner. While Repeal of the Union establishes an "Independent Irish Parliament," Colonial Home Rule retains the complete and absolute control of the Imperial Parliament at Westminster.

The final clause of the Partition and Crown Colony Act is as follows :

Notwithstanding the establishment of the Parliaments of Southern and Northern Ireland, or the Parliament of Ireland, or anything contained in this Act, the supreme authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters, and things in Ireland and every part thereof.

Keith, the great authority on Colonial Constitutions, describes these parliaments as "subordinate" and "delegated" bodies. "It is at present," he writes, "still the case that there is one unity, the Imperial Government, which speaks for the Empire as a whole and which in the last resort must be obeyed if it seems necessary to demand obedience."

To far away Australia, Canada and South Africa this provision is mere formality, of no practical moment, for the control of the Imperial Parliament will not, and cannot, be enforced. To Ireland it is of vital importance. It would deprive a settlement of all security if it remained within the strict constitutional right of the Imperial Parliament to alter or veto any Irish statute or even revoke the recognition of an independent parliament.

The Repeal of the "Union" includes all the rights demanded by Dominion Home Rule. It is not separation. There remains what O'Connell described as "the golden link of the Crown" involving control of the army and navy, but it makes a far stronger appeal not to moderate men merely but to extremists on both sides than Dominion Home Rule. For Sinn Feiners it is a definite recognition of Irish nationality, and recalls the most glorious period of Irish history when Grattan's Parliament sat in Dublin. "The Independent Kingdom of Ireland," with all its proud historic associations, is a far more attractive title than an "Irish Dominion" or, to my thinking, than a brand new "Irish Republic."

To patriotic Ulster Unionists not wholly blinded by bigotry the policy can hardly fail to appeal. As Irishmen they must sometimes feel it is an ignoble rôle they play in denying the nationhood of Ireland and in opposing her claim to self-government.

The policy of Repeal must recall to the minds of Ulster Unionists the fact that Ulster was the backbone of the force of Irish Volunteers by whose aid Grattan secured the declaration of Irish independence. They must remember that from Ulster came the most vehement protest against the "Union." Lecky tells us there were innumerable Orange petitions against it, and none in its favour. The petition from the County Down against the "Union" was signed by 17,000; the petition for it, despite the utmost efforts of the Government, by 415.

CHAPTER XI.

GRATTAN'S PARLIAMENT.

GRATTAN'S Parliament had one fatal weakness, easy to remedy, which led to its ultimate ruin :—the Executive Government was wholly independent of the House of Commons, but, in spite of that drawback, it accomplished great things for Ireland. The eighteen years of its existence were the most prosperous and most glorious in her history.

Lecky describes Irish finance during that period as “thoroughly sound.” “Nothing is more certain,” he writes, “than that for many years after the declaration of Irish independence, Irish wealth was rapidly augmenting.”

At the end of the session 1787 Foster, the Speaker of the House, when presenting the Money Bills to the Viceroy for the Royal consent, declared : “The wisdom of the principle which the Commons have established and preserved under your Grace's auspices is now powerfully felt throughout the Kingdom in its many consequences. Public credit has gradually risen to a height unknown for many years. Agriculture has brought in new supplies of wealth, and the merchants and manufacturers are each encouraged to extend their efforts by the security it has given them that no new tax will obstruct the progress of their works or impede the success of their speculations.”

The Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer was able, in



H. Foley R.A.]

STATUE OF HENRY GRATTAN.

[Photo W. Lawrence.

The House of Parliament is seen on the right, the statue of William III. in the background.

1788, to state from his place in the Irish House of Commons that "Irish public funds had been for several years past rated higher than English."

"The financial debates of 1788," Lecky goes on to say, "are singularly instructive; both on account of the rare amount of ability and knowledge they displayed and on account of the many incidental lights they throw on the condition of the country. The rate of interest on Irish public loans was this year assimilated to English."

Woodfall writes from Dublin, 1783, to Lord Aukland: "You who were here so lately would scarcely know this city, so much has it improved, so rapidly is it continuing to improve. I cannot but feel daily astonishment at the nobleness of the new buildings and the spacious improvements hourly making in the streets."

The old Custom House proved inadequate for the enormous increase of traffic, and a new and spacious building designed by the great architect, Gandon, was opened in 1791. In 1782, under the administration of Lord Carlisle, the Bank of Ireland was established in Dublin with a capital—enormous for those times—of a million and a half. The General Post Office, the Irish Academy, the College of Physicians, the College of Surgeons followed in rapid succession. Whole streets of stately mansions were erected, and the town houses of the great resident nobles rivalled the public buildings in magnificence. Ireland's increasing prosperity was proudly reflected in the splendour of the capital. It would appear from the parliamentary debates that about this period English commercial jealousies were again violently excited by Irish prosperity.

In his interesting treatise on Irish trade published in 1785, Lord Sheffield writes: "The improvement in Ire-

land is as rapid as any country ever experienced and the kingdom in general is in a most prosperous state." In 1790 the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer stated in parliament that "it was his pride and happiness to declare that he did not think it possible for any nation to have improved more in her circumstances." He gave the figures of the decrease in the National Debt and the vast increase in trade, and concluded: "I believe it would be difficult in the history of the world to show a nation rising faster in prosperity." In the Union debates Lord Plunket proclaimed, without contradiction, that "Ireland's trade revenue and manufacture had thriven beyond the hope of example of any other country." Evidence to the same effect might be multiplied indefinitely. Even Castlereagh and Cooke were constrained to bear testimony to the splendid achievements of the Parliament which they conspired to destroy.

Grattan supplies the explanation. "The Irish Parliament was resident in Ireland. It was potent for good because its members sat in Ireland, because they sat in their own country, and because at that time they had a country, because however influenced as many of its members were by places, however uninfluenced as many of its members were by popular representation, yet they were influenced by Irish sympathy. They did not like to meet every hour faces that looked shame on them. They did not like to stand in the sphere of their own infamy. They acted as the Irish absentee did not act; they saved the country because they lived in it."

Here surely is a picture that must appeal to every patriotic Ulsterman interested in the prosperity of his country and anxious for an opportunity to serve her. Prejudice apart, they must realize that they have nothing



Barraud & Hayter.]

[*Photo T. Geoghegan.*

THE INTERIOR OF THE IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS,

to fear and much to hope from an independent Irish Parliament. Religious bigotry has no existence in Ireland outside the north-east corner of Ulster. From south, east and west have come the emphatic testimony of resident Protestants to their cordial relations with their Catholic fellow-countrymen. If safeguards are demanded let them be conceded short of partition. They will never need to be put in force. By Repeal of the " Union " Grattan's independent parliament and the peace and prosperity of Ireland must be restored.

CHAPTER XII.

O'CONNELL AND REPEAL.

As has been said, the "Union" was from the first bitterly resented by the Irish nation. Three years after the passing of the Union, the young Protestant, Robert Emmet, to whom an eloquent tribute is paid by Washington Irving in his famous *Sketch Book*, raised the flag of armed revolt, and the insurrection was quenched in his blood. His name is still revered in Ireland. That insurrection is elsewhere described in an historical romance, *True Man and Traitor*. I need not here touch on the details.

There followed Dan O'Connell's peaceful, persistent, and all but successful movement in favour of Repeal of the "Union." Young O'Connell was, as we have already seen, a vehement opponent of the Union. A fervent Catholic, he never wavered in his statement that he "would be willing to purchase Repeal by the imposition of the penal code in all its unmitigated ferocity." To him belongs the glory of Catholic Emancipation, by which the proud title of "Liberator" was fairly earned. But the great work of his life to which his mature manhood and age were consecrated was Repeal of the Union.

O'Connell was essentially a pacifist: he deprecated violence; he abhorred bloodshed; he denounced war. He himself emphatically declared: "It is not by force or violence or turbulence I shall achieve this victory, dear

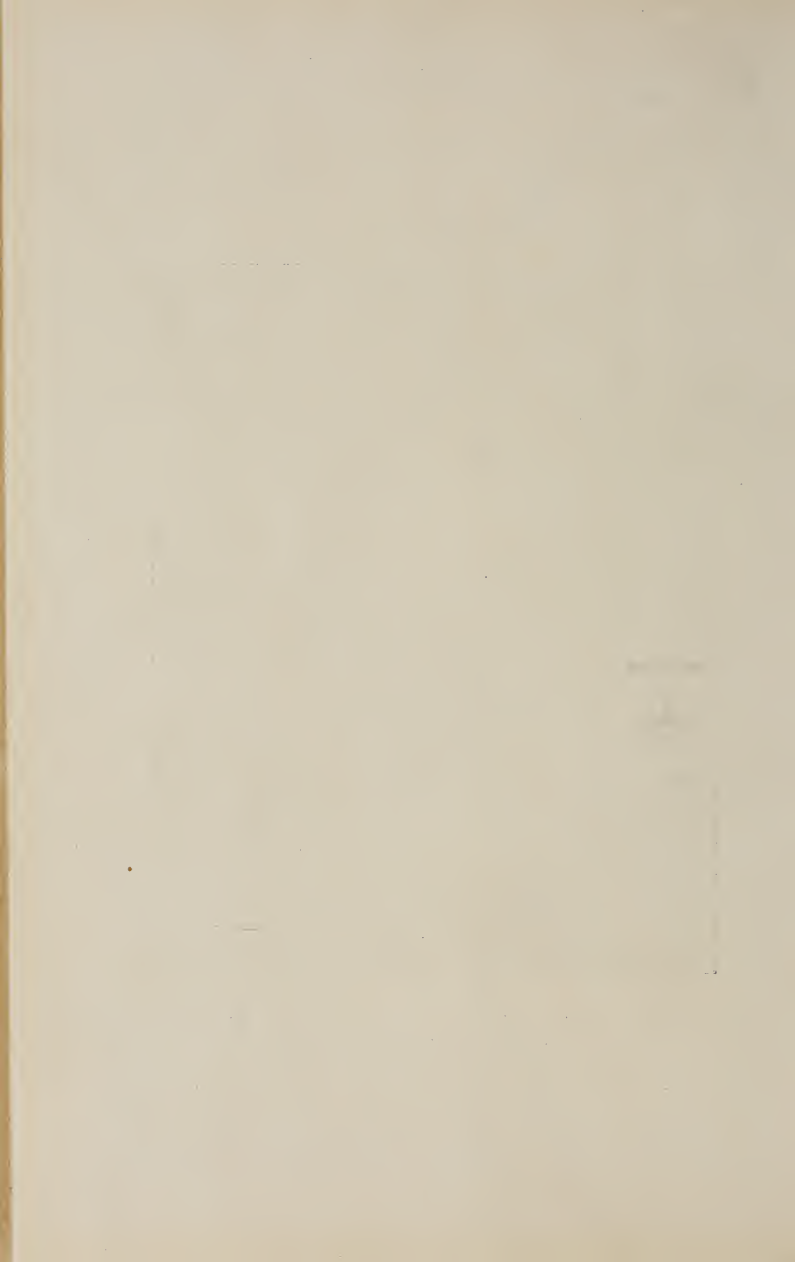


Bernard Mulrenin, R.H.A.]

[Photo Emery Walker.

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

From a miniature in the National Portrait Gallery, London.



above all earthly considerations to my heart. No ! perish the thought for ever. I will do it by legal, peaceable, and constitutional means, above all by the electricity of public opinion and the moral combination of great men. I am a disciple of the school of politicians who believe that the greatest of sublunary blessings is too dearly bought at the expense of one drop of human blood."

Endowed by nature with a persuasive and commanding personality, boundless enthusiasm, and stupendous eloquence, there never was a man more fitted to lead in such a peaceful campaign.

Many testimonies may be quoted from distinguished contemporaries to his power and achievement. The panegyric of Bulwer Litton, though almost too familiar for quotation, cannot be omitted :—

" Once to my sight the giant thus was given,
" Walled by wide air and roofed by boundless heaven.
" Beneath his feet the human ocean lay,
" And wave by wave flowed into space away.
" Methought no clarion could have sent its sound
" E'en to the centre of the hosts around ;
" And as I thought, up rose sonorous swell,
" As from some church tower swings the silvery bell.
" Aloft and clear from airy tide to tide
" It glided easy as a bird may glide
" To the last verge of that vast audience sent,
" It played with each wide passion as it went,
" Now stirred the uproar, now the murmur stilled,
" And sobs and laughter answered as it willed."

When O'Connell lay in prison after a trial, subsequently declared by the House of Lords to be a mockery

of justice, Thackeray, theretofore a persistent enemy of the Liberator, wrote in *Punch*:

“ Though we may lock you up, it goes against our feelings somehow to think that the greatest man in the Empire—for after all have you not done more for your nation than any man since Wellington did—should be put in a penitentiary.”

Lord Macaulay declared: “ The position which Mr. O’Connell holds in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen is a position such as no popular leader in the history of mankind ever attained. You are mistaken if you imagine that the interest with which he is regarded is confined to those islands. Go where you will on the Continent, from the moment your accent shows you to be an Englishman, the very first question asked by your companions, be they what they may, is ‘ What will be done with O’Connell?’ ”

From the first O’Connell’s campaign in favour of Repeal of the Union rapidly progressed and prospered. The Catholic Hierarchy were, as Bishop Higgins declared, solidly behind him. The enthusiasm of the nation was unbounded, vast sums were poured into the treasury of “ The Repeal Association,” “ monster meetings ” were held in every part of the country. O’Connell, approaching his sixty-eighth year with undiminished powers, was confident of speedy success. He declared that another six months would witness Repeal of the “ Union.”

He had grounds for this confident anticipation. His meetings kept growing in size and enthusiasm. At Tara the English *Times* estimated an audience of a million; the lowest estimate was eight hundred thousand. It was confidently anticipated that even this would be far sur-

passed by a meeting to be held at Clontarf from which friends of Repeal from all the world over were expected to assemble.

Then the English Government struck suddenly, and struck hard. The Clontarf meeting was proclaimed, and an overwhelming military force assembled to suppress it.

For the details that follow I am indebted to Mr. McDonagh's *Life of O'Connell*. "The meeting was to be held on Sunday. At half-past three on Saturday a messenger burst into the Corn Exchange, where the Committee of the Repeal Association was in session, with a copy of the proclamation, wet from the press. It took O'Connell but a moment to glance hurriedly through the document to make up his mind. 'This must be obeyed,' he said decisively. Not a voice was raised in protest. He dashed off an appeal to the people earnestly urging obedience to the proclamation, and sent it to the printers. Representatives of the Association on horseback were sent out in every direction to stop the people on their way to the meeting, and a collision between the populace and the military was avoided."

The proclamation of a peaceful meeting was, as O'Connell declared, grossly illegal, yet there was no alternative to submission.

Thirty-five thousand troops had been poured into the country, an enormous force, including the Fifth Dragoon Guards, the Sixtieth Rifles, the Fifty-fourth Foot, and a Brigade of the Royal Horse Artillery, with six-pounders unlimbered and ready for action, assembled at Clontarf to forcibly disperse the meeting, and the batteries of the Pigeon House Fort and the guns of three men-of-war in the bay were trained on the meeting ground.

Having regard to the delay in the proclamation, it

is hard to acquit the Government of having deliberately planned a collision between the military and the people. That terrible catastrophe O'Connell's prompt action averted. At the time his decision met with universal approval, even amongst the most ardent of the Young Irelanders. Later it was condemned by the party of armed revolutionaries as "a cowardly surrender." To reasonable men it is plain that he had no choice. Disobedience to the proclamation could only mean the massacre of an unarmed multitude.

The dispersal of the Clontarf meeting was a hard, indeed a fatal blow, for the Repeal Movement. But the Government was not yet satisfied.

On the 11th of October, 1843, in the 68th year of his age, O'Connell and some of his principal associates were prosecuted (as in later years Parnell and his associates were prosecuted) on a charge of conspiracy and sedition. The printed indictment, we are told, was "a hundred yards long."

From first to last the trial was an audacious mockery of law and justice. Sixty names, mostly Catholics, were mysteriously expurgated from the jury list : finally a jury was called to which no Catholic was admitted.

O'Connell defended himself : an extract from his speech is worth reading. "It is my proud boast," he said, "that through a long and eventful life I have faithfully devoted myself to the promulgation of the principle that freedom was not to be obtained by the effusion of human blood. I have made the same principle the basis for the Movement for Catholic Emancipation, and it was by a rigid adherence to that principle that I conducted the Movement to a glorious and triumphant issue."

It was admitted by the witnesses for the prosecution

that crime was practically unknown in the country, that the monster repeal meetings had never been marred by the smallest act of theft or violence.

But the result of the trial was, of course, a foregone conclusion. Chief Justice Pennefather, who presided, and who charged furiously for a conviction, gave a somewhat comical indication of his bias by his inadvertent allusion to the counsel for the defence as "the gentleman on the other side." The jury were prompt with their verdict of guilty.

A little later the sentence was pronounced by Judge Burton, the most fair-minded of the tribunal by which O'Connell was tried.

"The object of the traversers," he said, "was to obtain Repeal of the "Union" by means which he could not say were moderate, but without bloodshed. He believed the principal traverser had that design rooted in his mind, and that it was by his great influence that the country was preserved from civil war."

For this crime O'Connell was subjected to twelve months' imprisonment, and a fine of £2,000, and was ordered to find two sureties in £10,000 each for his good behaviour.

The Appeal Court in Ireland refused a new trial, but an upright majority of the English House of Lords quashed the infamous conviction. Lord Justice Denman, who delivered the judgment of the Court, declared in words which have become famous: "If such practices as have taken place in the present instance should continue, trial by jury would become a mockery, a delusion, and a snare."

O'Connell's liberty was regained, but his cause was lost. The Government had demonstrated, not for the

first or the last time, the futility in Ireland of peaceful, crimeless, constitutional agitation. Ardent and impatient spirits like Smith O'Brien, Mitchel, Gavan Duffy, and Meagher broke away from the pacific Repeal Association, and O'Connell died broken-hearted. Then followed the Young Ireland Rebellion of 1848, and later the Fenian Rising, both suppressed with ruthless severity. Then once again constitutional agitation under the leadership of the great lawyer, Isaac Butt, to be followed by Parnell and Redmond, took the field, was carried to a constitutional victory and defeated by the contingent rebellion of four counties in Ulster under the leadership of Sir Edward Carson, Mr. Bonar Law, and Mr. F. Smith, now Lord Chancellor of England.

CHAPTER XIII.

ULSTERIA.

THERE is indeed a section, small but violent, whom there is no hope of conciliating, who demand not justice but ascendancy, not religious tolerance but full licence to persecute. This is the section that recently drove their Catholic fellow-workmen by thousands from their employment in Belfast and filled the city with riot and bloodshed.

This intolerant bigotry has been put to sinister use by ambitious and designing politicians and English statesmen who should have known better than to have been scared into surrender by the bogey. In good truth *Ulsteria*, as it was happily named by Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, is a noisy but not a dangerous disease. Under pressure from Mr. Devlin, Sir Edward Carson practically confessed that all his blood-curdling threats, his mustering, drilling and arming which have wrought such incalculable evil in Ireland when the doctrine preached in Belfast was practised in Dublin, amounted to nothing more than a "toy rebellion."

There was an equally violent, though less successful outcry, from the same faction when the Disestablishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland was proposed. They then threatened rebellion if the Bill was passed, they swore they would muster and arm to resist it, "they would fight with the Bible in one hand and a rifle in the other," they "would die in the last ditch," they "would

kick the Queen's Crown into the Boyne." The Bill was passed and put into force and nothing happened.

"Never was heard such a terrible curse.

"But what gave rise, to no little surprise,

"Nobody seemed a penny the worse."

CHAPTER XIV.

JUSTICE, FREEDOM, FRIENDSHIP.

THE Repeal of the "Union" may be as violently denounced by intolerant bigotry, it will be as peaceably accepted. The policy of Repeal involves, of course, the complete fiscal independence of Ireland. The Premier recently made a somewhat sordid appeal to his audience when he urged as an argument against Irish fiscal control that it would enable the Irishman to buy his tobacco cheaper than the Englishman.

In former days the stock Unionist argument against Home Rule was the poverty of Ireland :—"The country could not be run on its own resources :—an Irish Government would go bankrupt in a year without the pecuniary aid of 'the rich and generous partner.' " It is now proposed that Ireland should not merely pay every farthing of its own expenses, but should contribute eighteen millions a year to the pocket of "the rich and generous partner."

It is not a little strange how completely ignored is the report of "The Financial Relations Commission" in the discussion of Irish finance. That Commission, mainly composed of eminent British financial experts, was presided over by an ex-Chancellor of the Imperial Exchequer, Mr. Childers. It justified the prophecy of Dr. Johnson to an Irish friend as recorded by Boswell : "Don't unite with us, sir; if you do we will rob you." There were

several reports : the most moderate will serve. The Majority, with the sanction of the Chairman, found that Ireland after the Union had been “ compelled to contribute an annual revenue of two-and-three-quarter millions in excess of what would result from taxation according to capacity. The total excess for the hundred and eleven years—from the Union to date of report—was estimated by the Majority Report at something over three hundred millions.” It was set at nearly double that figure in a Minority Report, to which Mr. Sexton was a party. Apart from this huge indebtedness to Ireland, England has no more claim to an Irish tribute than to a tribute from Canada or Australia.

It is to my mind inconceivable that the British electors, with the issue plainly before them, would persist in the pettifogging policy which in the old days lost the Empire its American colonies. The enslavement of Ireland costs the Empire merely in money, not to speak of reputation, far more than the tribute which the Premier proposes to extort.

Lord Salisbury, opposing Home Rule, declared that England could not tolerate a hostile Ireland on her flank. An Ireland on her flank England must have :—the only choice is between friendship and hostility. The islands are inevitably neighbours. They ought to be friends ; and I am convinced, in spite of all that has gone before, that Irish friendship can still be purchased by freedom.

